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Wm. H. Brown
To Friends of the
The Historical and Scientific Society
of Manitoba

The Earliest Fur Traders on the Upper Red River and Red Lake, Minn. (1783-1810)

A Paper Read Before the Society

By

CHARLES NAPIER BELL, LL.D., F.R.G.S., Etc.

—President of the Society

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1923



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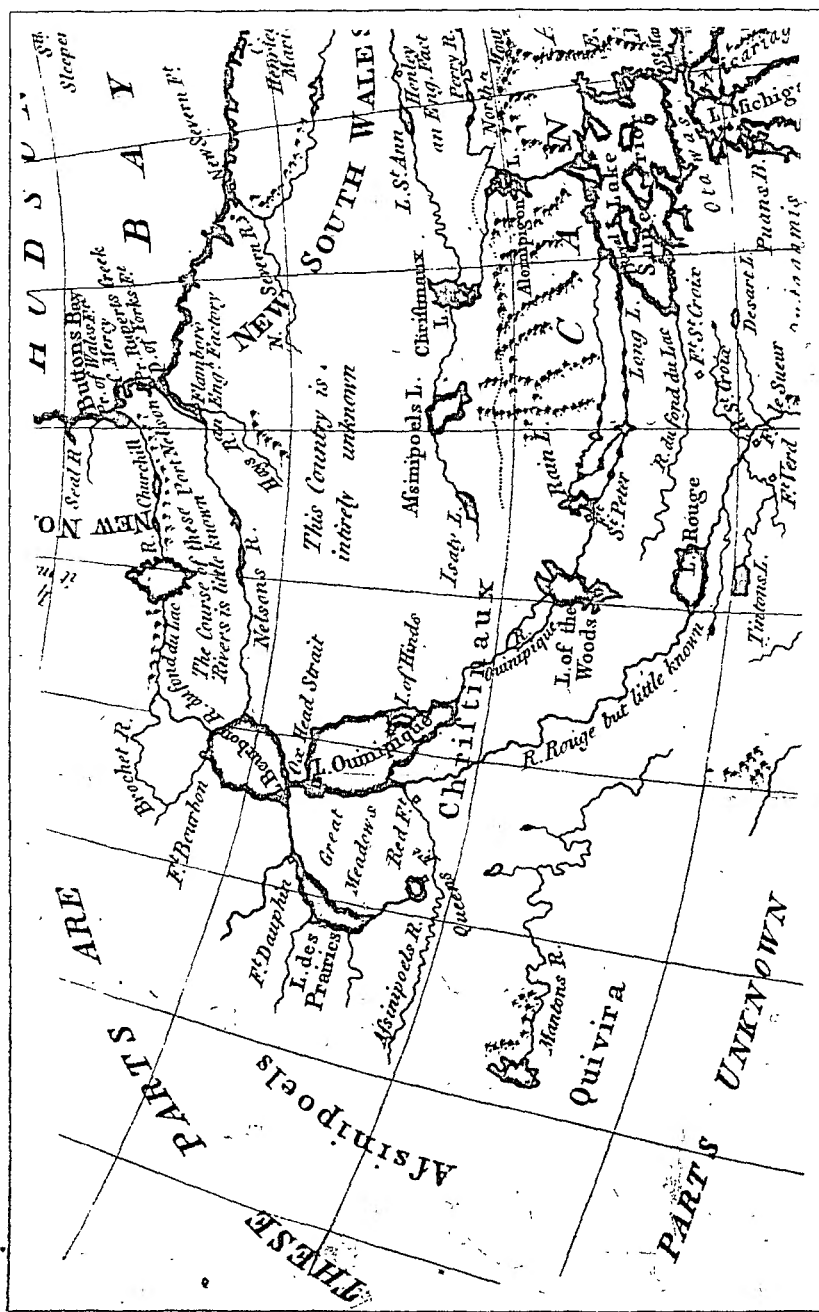
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A section of a little-known map by Thos. Condon, London (1750). Note names of Verendrye's forts translated into English, and that R. Rouge is "but little known" but drains Lak Rouge, which also is a tributary of the Mississippi.

Early Occupation by Fur Traders of the Upper Red River and Northern Minnesota

(By Chas. Napier Bell, LL.D., F.R.G.S.)

Very little documentary evidence is available regarding fur trading operations on the Upper Red River from the date of the Conquest of Canada until about the year 1800. While it has been stated that La Verendrye had an outpost on the Red River somewhere south of the mouth of the Assiniboine (about 1738), my own opinion is that no such post ever existed, because the available accounts of the work and travels of La Verendrye and his sons are so specific in regard to the establishment of trade posts on the streams and lakes tributary to Lake Winnipeg that a definite record would have been made of any post on the Upper Red River if one had been established by them. After the Conquest of Canada by the British, traders from Montreal, English-speaking traders such as Pond, Curry, Finley, the Frobishers and Alexander Henry (Sr.) for the first time pushed into the interior, west of Lake Superior, and, following the route taken by La Verendrye as far as Lake Winnipeg, continued directly on to the Saskatchewan, and some of them still farther to the Athabasca region. Alexander Henry (Jr.) in his journal, under date of 1801, notes that it was reported that Joseph Frobisher at one time wintered on the Red River between Lake Winnipeg and the present town of Selkirk. Henry has given us most valuable and detailed information through the medium of journals kept by himself while in charge of the Northwest Company trading operations on the Upper Red River from 1800-1810. He mentions, in passing up the Red River to Pembina and Park River (1800), where he had his headquarters, that he passed the old Northwest post at Pembina where Charles Chaboillez had wintered 1797-8. More attention seems to have been paid by the rival companies to the fur trade on the upper waters of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers at that period, though Henry incidentally, on occasions, refers to Hudson's Bay Company's opposition trade in his vicinity at Pembina.

Chaboillez and Grant, of the Northwest Company, also had posts at Red River and above Pembina at least two years before Henry's time.

Corresponding with the lack of exact data of the early occupation by fur traders of the Upper Red River is the lack of definite information as to the first trading in that area now included in Northern Minnesota lying between the Upper Red River and Lake Superior. The district I refer to more particularly is the height of land, the area of which is extensive, it being the watershed from which flow the following rivers: The St. Louis, into Lake Superior at a point known as Fond du Lac (now Duluth, Minn.) and on down to the Atlantic; the great Mississippi River, terminating in the Gulf of Mexico, and the Red River of the North flowing into Hudson Bay. Certainly a unique geographical and topographical situation.

In connection with this early occupation of Northern Minnesota by the fur traders, I am submitting with this paper two very rare and important original documents, being written agreements made between the Northwest Company of the one part and Jean Baptiste Cadotte of the other part, in the years 1795 and 1796.

The first is dated at Sault Ste. Marie on the 2nd September, 1795, and is written in the French language. It is signed by William McGillivray, Sr., partner in the Northwest Company, and J. Baptiste Cadotte, Jr., and these signatures are witnessed by Cuthbert Grant (afterwards very prominent in the history of the Red River settlement), and also by John Welles (the latter probably the accountant of the Northwest Company).

By this agreement, Cadotte engages himself to winter for three years as a clerk, and to go to one of the trading posts, or as they may decide, on account of their business. Subsequent evidence proves that Cadotte went into Northern Minnesota by the St. Louis River to the height of land, established posts and engaged in the fur trade. It is probable that Cadotte had, previous to this date, been in that territory.

The second agreement is made between the Northwest Company of the one part and Jean Baptiste Cadotte of the other. This agreement is dated at Grand Portage, Lake Superior (for many years the principal western post of the Company, and a point of departure for the trading posts west to the Red and Assiniboine Rivers; Saskatchewan and Athabasca), on the 25th of July, 1796, and is signed on behalf

of the Northwest Company by William McGillivray and Alexander McKenzie (afterwards Sir Alexander McKenzie, the discoverer of the McKenzie River, and the first man to cross the North American continent in northern latitudes from the Atlantic to the Pacific). This agreement was witnessed by A. N. McLeod, later a partner of the Northwest Company, and prominent in the Red River troubles of the early years of the Kildonan settlement.

After referring to the first above referred to articles of agreement and expressing the high opinion entertained of the integrity and ability of the said Jean Baptiste Cadotte, it was mutually agreed to open an adventure or trade to the Indian country on their joint account and risk, and to continue trading for the space of five years. This agreement contains a clause definitely defining the boundary of the area to be traded in, beginning at the Little River Auinui-pique (Winnipeg, of Minnesota), comprehending the lac des Sangsue (Leech Lake), Red Cedar Lake and Lac Rouge, and extending as far as the river (Red Lake River), which discharges itself into the great Red River. Special terms are laid down that neither of the parties to this agreement "on any pretense whatsoever shall meddle or interfere with the trade or the traffic of or belonging to the respective posts of the other; by decoying or debauching the Indians in the habit of trading at one post or another; nor shall either party injure or wrong the other by trading furs, giving or withdrawing credits to or from the Indians belonging to each other's posts, or otherwise; for it is hereby mutually agreed upon that, in case of default, the party so transgressing shall forfeit to the other such furs so traded or taken, and shall likewise incur any penalty that disinterested persons may allow."

As the Northwest Company already had posts on the Red River, it is evident the above provision was intended to prevent a clash of interests between the Northwest Company's traders on the Red River and the area allotted to Cadotte at the headwaters of the Mississippi.

These agreements, copies of the originals in my possession, follow:

AGREEMENT NO. 1
(*Translation from French*)

In the presence of the undersigned witnesses, there was also present Monsieur J. Bte. Cadotte who willingly engages himself to the North West Company to winter for three years

as a Clerk and will go to one of the Posts, or, as they may decide on account of their business, will execute punctually all the orders which to him will be given by the said gentlemen or all other representatives or agents of the said company, and if it happens that there is any other person against the said society the said Monsieur J. Bte. Cadotte will do all possible to cause to fail his neighbors in their undertakings as much as is in his power to do so. In one word: he will do all that a good and loyal clerk ought and is obliged to do without leaving the service or without giving up their interests until the end of his term. This undertaking thus made for the price and sum of £3600 old currency of the Province of Quebec per year and an equipment like the other gentlemen in the said service and that which he will be able to take on his own account will be charged to him, as charged to them, and the wheat and flour of which he will have need to feed his father and family will be charged at same price as at Detroit with packing and transportation.

The term of his engagement to begin when the first canoe of the North West Company will arrive here from Montreal next spring and to continue until his arrival here in autumn 1799.

Made at Sault de Ste. Marie the 2nd September 1795.

Witness,

CUTHBERT GRANT

JOHN WELLES

W. MCGILLIVRAY,

Agent for North West Coy.

J. BTE. CADOTTE, Junr.

AGREEMENT NO^r 2

Articles of agreement, had, made, concluded and agreed upon at the Grand Portage this twenty-fifth day of July, in the year of Our Lord One Thousand, Seven Hundred Ninety-six, between William McGillivray and Alexander McKenzie Esquire, agents acting for and on behalf of the North West Company, of the one part, and Jean Baptiste Cadotte Gentleman, on the other Part:

Whereas by certain Articles of Agreement bearing date at the Sault de St. Marie, the Second day of September last the said J. Baptiste Cadotte became bound and obligated to serve the said North West Company in the capacity of clerk for the term of three years; and whereas from the high opinion entertained of the integrity and ability of the said Jean Baptiste Cadotte and for other good causes and purposes; the Parties to these presents have mutually consented

and agreed to open an adventure or trade to the Indian Country on their joint account and risk; to commence (from and after) the day and date of these presents and to continue for and during the space of five years: Be it known therefore by these presents that the beforementioned agreement shall for the present cease and have no effect and instead thereof, they the said Parties, have chosen concluded and agreed upon the terms, conditions and stipulations hereinafter mentioned. That is to say:

1st. The said North West Company by their said Agents agree to furnish, fit out and provide at this place or the Fond du Lac, all such goods as the said Jean Baptiste Cadotte may require for the said Trade or Adventure; say a yearly assortment of merchandize not exceeding six canoes load such as are usually required for this country, (the quantity, however, to be augmented or diminished as may hereafter be mutually agreed upon), at ~~and~~ for the following rates and prices, viz.: Dry goods at an advance of forty percent on the current prices of Montreal; Tobacco, Ammunition, Iron Works, soap and such like goods at an advance of Seventy-five percent on the prices aforesaid; Liquor and Provisions (from Montreal), such as Rum, Beef, Pork, Butter, etc., etc., at one hundred per cent on the prices aforesaid; freight of Provisions from Detroit at eighteen Livres (Montreal money) per piece, ditto from Michilimickinac at twelve Livres per piece:

Article 2nd. The North West Company, by their Agents, shall in their own name engage such Clerks, Interpreters and men as may be required for their concern, and all engagements *otherwise* made, shall be in the name of the North West Company, and upon the following terms, viz.: Advances made to men from Montreal shall be chargeable without deduction, but these men who shall be hired in this country and who shall (at the time of engaging) be already indebted to the said North West Company; such debts shall be only taken and assumed by this concern at half the amount or valuation of the debt, and no debt whatsoever shall be reckoned upon or so taken for more than (or over and above) the sum of Eight Hundred Livres, this clause to be reciprocal inasmuch, that the North West Company shall receive back the debts of this concern upon the same principle and footing: not that it is meant hereby, nor can it be so understood that any such debtors can or should avail themselves by this arrangement, but that the full original amount shall become the right and property and be at the disposal of the party holding them.

3rd. The said Jean Baptiste Cadotte doth promise, covenant and agree to and with the said North West Company and Agents aforesaid, that he will trade, vend, sell and barter all such goods as shall be so furnished and provided, in the best and most advantageous manner, for and on the joint account of them, the said parties; That he shall keep regular and fair account of all his transactions (for which he shall be allowed his personal necessities out of the common stock subjecting himself nevertheless and all those who shall or may be employed under him) to the following reservations, limitations and restrictions:

First; the said Trade or Adventure shall be confined to certain boundaries, to wit, the Lac Rouge and its dependencies, beginning at the Little River Auinuipique, comprehending the Lac des Sangsue, Red-cedar-Lake, said Lac Rouge and extending as far as the River that discharges itself into the Great Red River: Second, Reciprocal, the Parties to these Presents shall neither of them, on any pretence whatsoever, meddle or interfere with the Trade or traffick of, or belonging to the respective posts of the other; by decoying or debauching the Indians in the habit of trading at one Post to that of another; nor shall either party injure or attempt to wrong the other, by trading Furs, giving or withdrawing credits to, or from Indians belonging to each other's Posts, or otherwise; For it is hereby mutually agreed upon, that in case of default, the Party so transgressing shall forfeit to the other all such Furs so traded or taken, and shall likewise incur any penalty that disinterested persons may allow.

4th. And the said North West Company agree to receive from the said Jean Baptiste Cadotte, either at this place or Pond du Lac all such furs and Peltries as shall proceed from the said Adventure, at regular, fair and States prices, which prices shall be fixed upon by the parties themselves yearly at the time of making the outfit; Those for the present year shall be as follows, namely, Beaver at Nine Livres per pound, others twenty livres each; Martin four livres; Fisher Six livres each; Minks fifty sols each, Bears twenty-four livres each, cubs twelve livres each; Racoons forty-five sols each; cased Cats sixteen livres each; Foxes ten livres each, Deer skins two livres per pound, and all real summer peltries half these prices only, and so in proportion for other years; the amount of which furs and Peltries shall be placed to the credit of said Adventure each and every year, in the month of November next after the delivery of the same.

5th. And last it is stipulated and mutually agreed upon between the said Parties, that as from the high prices at which goods and provisions are sold for this year at Montreal that there may arise a loss upon the first outfit; the said North West Company by their Agents aforesaid promise and agree that they only shall sustain and take upon themselves, (and shall hold free the said Jean Baptiste Cadotte) from any such loss that shall or may arise, that is to say, upon the first year's adventure only; And that because it is moreover agreed upon that at the expiration of that period it shall and may be lawful for the said Jean Baptiste Cadotte to make his choice or election either to recede from or take up the present agreement, or to enter upon, resume and abide by the first beforementioned agreement; Then shall this or the other become null and void and of no effect, and one only remain in force, anything herein mentioned to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding.

In witness whereof the parties have hereunto set their hands and seals at the Grand Portage aforesaid, the day and date first above written.

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of

A. N. McLEOD
RICHARD WM. BERRY

JEAN BTTE. CADOTTE
W. MCGILLIVRAY
ALEX. MACKENZIE

Note 1—After the conquest the value of the livre was fixed at the equivalent of a shilling, Canadian currency, while the English shilling was rated at one and four-pence. Twenty-four sols were equal to one shilling and a penny sterling, or about one cent each. (Bain's reprint Journal of A. Henry, Sr.)

Note 2—I have in my possession a large number of signed and witnessed agreements between voyageurs or other employees, and both the Northwest Company and the Alexander Mackenzie Company, known as the X.Y. Co., these documents being dated between 1787 and 1820.

Historical writers, in attempting to afford information as to the first traders in, and occupation of, the area now included in Northern Minnesota, make more or less casual mention of J. Baptiste Cadotte, Jr., but usually give vague or incorrect statements as to dates and the circumstances under which he traded in that district. For instance, the Minnesota historian, Rev. E. D. Neill, in his history of the

Ojibway Indians (Minnesota Historical Society, 1885), states that J. Bte. Cadotte, Jr., had a trading post in 1797 at Fond du Lac on the St. Louis River (now Duluth), and the next year, 1798, had a post in the Red River Valley. As a matter of fact, David Thompson, the astronomer of the Northwest Company, who has left us such a wonderful account of his explorations in Northwestern America, 1784-1812 (Champlain Society Publication, so ably edited by Mr. J. B. Tyrrell), made quite a lengthy stay in the Spring of 1798 with J. B. Cadotte, Jr., at his trading post situated on the bank of the Red Lake River where the Clearwater River joins it, being the site now occupied by the town of Red Lake Falls, Minn. Cadotte had no post on the Red River. Thompson was on one of his famous exploring expeditions, this time making a journey between the Upper Red River and Fond du Lac, Lake Superior, the route followed being, roughly speaking, up Red Lake River, the Clearwater, Red Lake, and across by the Turtle Lake, Red Cedar Lake (now Cass) and Sandy Lake to the St. Louis River, which discharges into Lake Superior. While Cadotte had for some years previously, as proved by the above agreements, penetrated into the Red Lake, Turtle Lake, Cedar Lake and Sandy Lake districts at the head of the Mississippi via the St. Louis River, this was probably the first occasion on which a white man passed through the whole territory extending from the Red River to Lake Superior, and a good part of this journey was made on snowshoes, at the latter end of March and early April, 1798. Thompson has recorded in his journal that "Mr. Baptiste Cadotte was about thirty-five years of age. He was the son of a French gentleman by a native woman, and married a very handsome native woman, also the daughter of a Frenchman. He had been well educated in Lower Canada, and spoke fluently his native language, with Latin, French and English. I had long wished to meet a well educated native from whom I could derive sound information, for I was well aware that neither myself, nor any other person I had met with, who was not a native, were sufficiently masters of the Indian languages." Which accords in all respects with other accounts of Cadotte's education and breadth of information. Having, on account of the spring breakup and the interval between seasons, when it was impossible to travel either by snowshoes or canoe, to remain with Cadotte from the 25th March to the 9th April, 1798 (with the exception of three or four days in which Henry, on snowshoes, made an unsuccessful attempt to ascend to

Red Lake), he gained from Cadotte much information respecting the language, customs, traditions and superstitions of the "Chipaway" (Ojibway) Indians.

Thompson, after leaving Cadotte at his trading post of the Northwest Company, mentions visiting another Northwest Company's trading post at Red Cedar Lake (now Cass Lake), of which Mr. John Sayer, one of the wintering partners of the Company, was in charge and later found at Sand Lake River still another trading house of the Company, in charge of Mons. Boiske (also spelled Buskay or Bousquai), all of which clearly establishes the fact that the Northwest Company had that whole district pretty well covered by trading posts at least as early as 1798.

It has been claimed by J. V. Brower (commissioner of the Itasca State Park, representing also the Historical Society of Minnesota in 1893) that a William Morrison, then but twenty-one years of age, an employee of the X.Y. Trading Company, made in 1804 the discovery of Elk Lake, the source of the Mississippi River. It seems scarcely credible that the experienced and seasoned traders of the Northwest Company, such as Cadotte, Sayer and Boiske, expert in the Indian dialects, who had for many years before the advent of the lad, Morrison, been in that region, had not visited that particular lake (Elk Lake of the English and Lac la Biche of the French), situated in the district which was comprised within their regular field of trading operations, and it seems more than likely that, during the many years they, as traders, traversed and occupied that territory, and outfitted with trading goods all the Indians therein, they were well aware of and did visit Elk Lake. Morrison's account of visiting Elk Lake in 1804 appears in a letter written by him over fifty years later, and, with our present knowledge of the names of the representatives of the Canadian Fur Companies, it is evident that Morrison could only have been, at his age, an employee holding a very subordinate position, and under the orders of some representative of the Company.

Alexander Henry (the nephew), who from 1800-1810 was the chief officer of the Northwest Company on the Upper Red River, gives an interesting account of a trip he made in the Autumn of 1800 from his newly-established fort (which was situated at the location where Park River enters the Red River) to the site of Cadotte's already abandoned post.

This extract from Henry's journal gives us a good description of the district extending from the Red River to the Clearwater River as it was at that time:

"Oct. 28, 1800—At sunrise we saddled and set off, crossed Snake River (perhaps in the vicinity of Warren, seat of Marshall & Co., where the railway now crosses) and directed our course S.E. over an open level plain towards an island of wood (*islette de bois*, a clump of trees) which we could scarcely discern. Here we found a herd of buffalo, but we could see no wood, excepting that of the Little River and of the island ahead of us. On approaching the latter, we found some rising ground and barren hillocks, between which lay small lakes and marshes; islands of poplar and willows were now very frequent. At twelve o'clock we came in sight of the tall wood of Red Lake River, commonly called Riviere du Lac Rouge. We now had an ugly country to pass, overgrown with small poplars, willows and long grass. Red deer were very numerous, and for the first time we saw numerous tracks and roads of the fallow deer, which we perceived jumping in every direction. We crossed Black River (present name) a few miles from its entrance. This small river takes its water from several marshes to the N.E., but at no great distance, and runs a winding course through a country of wood and meadow until it empties into Riviere du Lac Rouge (at Huot, Polk Co.). Having crossed the river, which is not more than 15 feet wide, we proceeded through the woods to the banks of Red Lake River and came out exactly opposite Riviere a L'Eau Claire (Clearwater River), which falls in on the S. from S.E. This river is navigable for small Indian canoes, but very rapid near the entrance, where there is famous sturgeon fishing in the spring—indeed it may be said to last all summer, unless the water is very low, which was the case at present. Near the entrance of this river are the remains of an old wintering habitation, now fallen to the ground. Here we were in great expectation of finding Indians, but were disappointed. Not one fresh sign was to be seen. We proceeded up Riviere du Lac Rouge on foot, leading our horses by the bridles, the wood and the underbrush being too thick to permit riding. We cut across the points of land, by which means we were often near the river. This river here runs from E. to W., is broad but shallow and often interrupted by chains and reefs of stones which run across from shore to shore. In some places there are rapids about half a mile long, over which a small Indian canoe would find some difficulty in passing. But it must be observed that this year is one of very low water, as the Indians tell me there is generally enough water in this river for large canoes to pass with full loads. The river now making a great bend in coming from North to

South, we left it here and gained the plains, where we mounted our horses and crossed over a low, level plain of about four miles, when we again fell among small poplars and willows, then on large wood, and immediately after came down to the river at a place called Campement de Plumb, opposite Liard (Cottonwood) River, which comes in here on the opposite side of Red Lake River. Here also we expected to find Indians, but there was no sign of any. Red and fallow deer are numerous. They have beaten paths in the woods like those of the buffalo on the banks of the Red River. It appears also that bears have been plentiful by marks on the oak trees and fruit bushes. Here we stopped for the night (on the East bank of Red River Lake). The river runs from North to South and is very rapid and shallow, but broader than below. The banks are low and well wooded with elm, oak, poplar and bois blanc. My Indian guide was anxious for me to return, saying we should find no Indians this side of Red Lake, but having come so far for nothing, I was determined to search one day more when, if we did not find them, we would return. He tells me there is only one place more where there is any prospect of finding any, half a day's journey up the river, at the entrance of Riviere aux Voleurs (Thief River)."

In view of the specific terms laid down in the second above given agreement of July, 1795, between the Northwest Company and J. Bte. Cadotte, Jr., that the Company should not meddle or interfere with the trade or traffic of or belonging to the posts of Cadotte, and that Henry should have been looking for Indians in connection with trading up Red Lake River, from his post at Park River at its junction with the Red River, it would appear that either Henry was breaking this agreement or else the boundary of Cadotte's trading grounds, as defined in the agreement, extended westerly only to the exit of Red Lake River from Red Lake, and hence Henry's territory in that case would extend up the Red Lake River to its origin in Red Lake.

Wm. W. Warren, a descendant of the Cadotte family, in his memoirs (History of the Ojibways) as published by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1885, gives some interesting bits of information as to the origin of the Cadotte family. In particular, Mr. J. Fletcher Williams, who edited these memoirs, writes as follows:

"The Cadottes, into which family the Warren brothers married, were descendants of a Mons. Cadeau, who, it is stated, came to the Ojibway country in 1671, in the train of

the French envoy, Sieur de St. Lussou. His son, John Baptiste Cadotte (as the name was then and subsequently spelled) became a trader among the Ojibways, and was engaged for a time with Alexander Henry, who in his work mentions him very frequently. He was married by a Catholic priest to an Ojibway woman of the A-waus-e clan, and made his residence at Sault Ste. Marie. Mrs. Cadotte is described by Henry as a woman of great energy and tact, and force of character. She aided her husband in his trading operations, sometimes undertaking long expeditions with coureurs du bois for him. She bore him two sons, John Baptiste Cadotte, Jr., and Michael Cadotte, who also became traders among the Ojibways, and were men of energy and ability in their calling. Both of them were well educated and had great influence in the Lake Superior region and Northwest, where they were well known. Both J. B. and Michael Cadotte married Ojibway women, the latter the daughter of White Crane, hereditary chief of La Pointe Village. Their descendants are quite numerous, and are scattered throughout the Northwest. Michael Cadotte died at La Pointe in 1836, aet. 72 years. Though he had once made large profits in the fur trade and was wealthy, he died poor, a result of the usual improvidence which that kind of life engenders. and of his generosity to his Indian relatives."

Alexander Henry (the uncle), in his most interesting book on the early fur trading of the Canadian Northwest, 1760-1776, gives some definite information about John Bte. Cadotte, Sr., and his family, as Henry entered into partnership at the Sault with Cadotte. Henry afterwards, as a partner of the Northwest Company, assisted J. Bte. Cadotte, Jr., and most likely largely influenced the Company to enter into the fur trading operations outlined in the two above given "agreements," dated respectively at Sault Ste. Marie and Grand Portage. The originals of these agreements, with some lists of supplies furnished to Cadotte on his private account, are in my possession. It is apparently accepted from various statements recorded at the time that J. B. Cadotte, Sr., was largely responsible for keeping the Ojibways from joining with Pontiac in his famous "Conspiracy," all accounts of him indicating that he had tremendous influence with the Ojibways, both on account of his own personal character as a man, and the close connection with the tribe of his wife, who was a daughter of that nation. Many descendants, through the families of his sons, John Bte. and Michael, still live in the Western States.

The Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society in 1910 issued a volume containing a translation of the "Narrative of the Travels and Adventures of a Merchant Voyageur in the Savage Territories of Northern America," leaving Montreal the 28th of May, 1783 (to 1820), by Jean Baptiste Perrault. This narrative affords most valuable information regarding the earliest fur trading in Northern Minnesota. Perrault was in charge of the construction in 1793 of Fort St. Louis, the base establishment at Fond du Lac (now Duluth) of the Northwest Company for their operations in Northern Minnesota, and while the dates he gives are in instances not quite reliable, it is certain that Perrault was in the interior as early as 1784. In the year 1794 he refers to Cadotte, and intimates that that year the latter entered into a partnership with the Northwest Company and wintered at Lac Rouge (Red Lake), also that in that year Sayer wintered at Thief River, Bousquet and Roy at Lac des Sables (Sand Lake), while Perrault himself was at Leech Lake. Perrault also states that he met Alexander Henry in the Fond du Lac country in 1794. Perrault gives most exhaustive details of the fur trading operations in that region until about 1804.

It is apparent that the statement in Dr. Neil's History of Minnesota was at least approximately correct, wherein he says that Fort St. Louis was established by the Northwest Company as the result of an expedition by John Baptiste Cadotte in 1792 to the sources of the Mississippi. In fact, Perrault's narrative corroborates the agreements, the originals of which I submit with this paper, and is a most valuable contribution to the accurate data so far unearthed by historians.

Perrault opens an entirely new field for investigation for modern historians when he states (in 1784) that a Jos. Reaume had wintered at Red Lake in 1783, and was the first man to open out a route from that lake to Rainy Lake. This is the first direct mention of such a travelled route that I have come across, but Henry, in his journal at Park River, December 21st, 1800, states that he had arranged with M. Cadotte at Red Lake for horses to be sent through via Red Lake to Rainy Lake. Coues (page 164 of Henry's Journal) states that Jos. Reaume, of the Northwest Company, was in the Fond du Lac department in 1799 on a wage of 1,000 livres, and that a man of the same name wintered at Folle Avonne Lake or River in 1801 and 1802.

Legardeur de Saint Pierre, who succeeded Verendrye in command of the French posts west of Lake Superior, and who was charged by Governor the Marquis de Lajonquiere with the "Discovery of the Western Sea," in his report dated in 1750 (Canadian Archives, 1886) writes at length when at Rainy Lake post (Fort Frances, Ont.) of his endeavouring to persuade the Indians there to refrain from sending war parties to attack the Sioux and there evidently was a regular Indian war party route from Rainy Lake or River to the south.

It may be noted that some old maps show a route from the Lake of the Woods via War Road River to the Rosseau River and down that stream to where it empties into the Red River north of the present International Boundary.

It is very extraordinary that more notice has not been taken of Perrault's narrative by modern writers on northern Minnesota history, and this narrative, with other original data submitted herewith, may well cause a rewriting of much that has been written of a period which has always been very vaguely referred to, it being evident that writers had not adequate documentary evidence at their disposal.

Another strange circumstance is that Perrault's narrative was amongst Schoolcraft's papers, and should have enabled him to give much more extensive information than he has apparently placed on record. (See Schoolcraft's "History of the Indian tribes of the United States," vol. 3, Washington 1853.) That the country included in the tableland from which flows the Mississippi, the Red River and St. Louis River was to some extent known, is evident from the fact that Red Lake, under either its Indian, French or English name, appears on many of the maps published between 1750 and 1784, and it frequently is shown as the source of, or at least provides a main tributary of the Mississippi. Dated long before we have any record of traders being in that country (J. Reaume is the first in 1783), maps in my possession show Red Lake's association with the Red River, which, under its Indian, French or English name, appears flowing north from its source in Red Lake and the question of who supplied this information to the world, enabling geographers to compile the maps, is yet to be solved.

